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ABSTRACT

Guidelines detail the resource room program for children with educational disability. Aspects covered include administration, the teacher, placement, class organization, and physical classroom needs. (JD)

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RESOURCE-ROOM PROGRAM: OUTLINE AND CONCEPT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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RESOURCE-ROOM PROGRAM: OUTLINE AND CONCEPT

This is the first revision of the guidelines that were first prepared in May, 1969. At that time, the guidelines were established after several meetings with local school district personnel. These revised guidelines were prepared in February, 1970 after once again meeting with all those with an interest in the program. One meeting was held with the eleven teachers actually working in the program and the three teachers at the Child Evaluation Center. The following week these same persons met together, but in addition the meeting was attended by local district psychologists, pupil personnel directors, principals, and others.

These guidelines will continue to serve as rules for the operation of the resource-room program at least through the 1970-71 school year. It is expected once again that reasonable attempts will be made by those involved in the program to follow the guidelines.

The resource-room program outlined here is not the only way such a program could be established and operated. There are many ways this could be done, and there are many different ideas about what constitutes a resource room, or resource center, or resource teacher. By preparing these guidelines it is hoped that some degree of certainty will exist among those directly working in the program or who are directly affected by it so minimum effort is expended on misunderstandings and the need for continuous clarifications as each issue erupts through the course of a school year.

Mr. Roger Reger
Director

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1. General definition

A resource-room program consists of having students with certain defined problems enrolled in regular classes with additional specialized assistance received from a special education teacher working out of a room containing space for small numbers of children, certain furniture, selected equipment, and necessary materials and supplies.

An operating principle of the program is that the resource-room teacher does not establish the child's educational program and then expect the school to accommodate itself to this program. Rather, it is assumed that the child's regular classroom teacher is the coordinator of learning for the child, and all the activities of the resource-room teacher must be built within and around the regular classroom teacher's program.

On the other hand, the resource-room teacher is considered a focal point in a building for knowledge, materials, and assistance in the area of educational disability in children. The resource-room teacher works not only with individual children who have problems but also with their classroom teachers.

2. The BOCES-local district relationship

BOCES plays a less direct role in this program than in other special education programs. This is because more responsibility seems naturally to lie with the local district.

BOCES will be most active in the direct supervision of the specific work of the resource-room teachers, primarily providing technical information of a "how-to-do-it" nature. In addition, BOCES will be active in conducting inservice education activities to promote the acquisition of technical knowledge by the staff as well as better understanding of the dynamics of behavior. Finally, it probably will be necessary on occasion for BOCES to ensure that the guidelines for the operation of the program are being followed by all participants.

3. The role of the principal

The principal is as much responsible for the effective implementation of the resource-room program in his building as he is for the effective implementation of any other program in the building. The principal has a different relationship with teachers on his own staff and speech correctionists, psychologists, remedial reading

specialists, or curriculum consultants. The existance of different forms of administrative relationships should not cloud the fact of responsibility for program implementation.

More specifically, following these guidelines the principal is responsible for helping the resource-room teacher and his regular classroom teachers implement the program. He should fully understand the program and serve as a leader in communications among staff and community, and should guide the program in such practical matters as referring children and scheduling their activities with those staff assigned to work with them. It is the responsibility of the BOCES supervisory staff to assist the principal in the implementation of the program by improving the skills of the teacher.

4. The administrative structure of the program

Within BOCES the resource-room program is a part of the Child Evaluation Center at 50 Indian Road. This arrangement is intended to accomplish three major aims: (1) to promote the inservice education of the resource-room staff, (2) to coordinate the effective evaluation of children and where possible the implementation of results, and (3) to assist regular classroom teachers in working with students seen at the Child Evaluation Center who may not be assigned to the resource-room program when such students happen to be in a building with a resource-room unit.

5. Inservice education

Inservice education sessions will be held from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. each Wednesday afternoon during the school year. Attendance at these sessions is mandatory for the resource-room staff and absences must be for the same kinds of reasons that are used for absence from any other time of the working day.

An agenda of the inservice meetings will be mailed in advance to all principals who have resource-room programs and to representatives of local school district chief school officers for any further distribution that might be desired locally.

6. Hiring and placing staff

Either the local district or BOCES can initiate the hiring/placement process, which will be a joint endeavor. Those persons felt by BOCES to be eligible will be sent to interested schools for interviews and an attempt will be made to have the teachers, the principals and BOCES supervisors agree to placement.

7. General definition of the resource-room teacher

A standard will be set where a master's degree, or near, and one year of experience with BOCES will be required. However, because the supply of such personnel is limited, exceptions will be made as needed.

The resource-room teacher must be familiar with educational measuring instruments and be able to assess the specific kinds of learning processes and problems in children. The teacher must be familiar with a wide range of educational materials and equipment; and the teacher must be a first-rate instructor and be skilled in working with people.

8. The duties of the resource-room teacher

There are three main and basic duties:

1. To evaluate children and to determine the nature of their learning problems. All children formally enrolled in the program will be evaluated. In addition, some children not formally enrolled in the program also can be provided with certain brief evaluation services at the discretion of the principal and the resource-room teacher. Any extensive evaluation services would be referred to the Child Evaluation Center on Indian Road.

2. To work in a tutorial capacity with most children, but also to try to meet the needs of children in other relevant ways as determined on an individual basis. For instance, in a certain situation a child may need special training in developing specific motor skills and the resource-room teacher may work together with the physical education instructor to provide the proper assistance. Or especially with some older children, some personal guidance may be required in some matters.

3. To talk frequently with the teachers who have the children in their regular classrooms so both persons working with each child are consistent in their efforts. This is very important and at least 15% of the available work time should be allocated for this function.

In addition, the resource-room teacher can be expected to provide assistance to other teachers in the building in the form of suggestions on techniques, materials, and programs. The resource-room teacher will work cooperatively on a peer basis with psychologists, social workers, reading specialists, speech correctionists, physical education instructors, teacher consultants of children with vision and hearing disabilities, and all persons concerned about the children

including parents. If such persons as reading specialists, speech correctionists, and others are providing services to certain individuals, the resource-room teacher should not provide identical services to the same individuals.

9. Duties to be avoided by the resource-room teacher

The resource-room teacher should not function as an assistant principal, a building disciplinarian, a crisis agent ("crisis agent" meaning somebody to send temporary problems to, etc.), a substitute for teachers who are ill when regular substitutes are difficult to obtain, a lunchroom supervisor, or a source of solutions t to all childrens' problems in the school.

10. Substitutes

When the resource-room teacher is absent, no substitute should be used. If an extended absence is involved, a replacement would be used if available at the discretion of the building principal.

11. Identifying children as candidates for the resource-room program

This will be determined locally. Generally, the criteria for eligibility are whether (1) the child definitely needs assistance, that he or she cannot function in a regular curriculum program unassisted, and (2) he can profit to any degree from the program as it is defined.

All children in the program must be considered as having some form of educational disability.

The resource-room teacher will not be responsible for conducting surveys or otherwise screening large numbers of students in a building for possible admission to the program; this is a local-district responsibility.

The program can be viewed as something between a special class program and a program where little or no assistance beyond the "regular" program is available.

Children with hearing disabilities as a rule should be considered eligible for placement into another program designed specifically for such children. However, these children need not be excluded if this is deemed to be the best program for them.

12. Placement into the program

The Commissioner of Education's regulations on the handicapped affect how children are placed into special education programs and each local school district will want to review this. The local district Committee on the Handicapped can take responsibility for making all placement recommendations into the program.

Placement decisions are delegated to three people: (1) the building principal where the resource room is housed, (2) the resource-room teacher, and (3) the local district representative of the chief school officer. (Only a list of designated representatives approved by both local chief school officers and BOCES is to be considered the "representative of the chief school officer"--this representative cannot further delegate his assignment.)

Forms in triplicate are to be used in placing students into the program. One copy of this form should remain in the resource room at all times, one copy should be retained by the building principal, and one copy should be retained by the representative of the local district chief school officer.

13. Intradistrict placement

Children from different attendance areas within a local district can be sent to a school or to schools where there are resource-room facilities. This is a local option. However, all children enrolled in a resource-room unit must be full-time students in the building where the program is located. No child can come to the resource room from another building (e.g., for "tutoring") and then return to his school of attendance. Such an arrangement dilutes the building principal's control, it makes it difficult for the resource-room teacher to maintain effective communications with the child's "regular" teacher, and it is inconsistent with the basic idea of the program.

14. Interdistrict placement of children

It is possible for children from different districts to be sent to one district where a building operates a resource-room program. Any transfers of children from one district to another should be handled between the districts directly and not through BOCES because all the students would be on local registers.

15. Attendance registers

All children in the resource-room program will be on local district attendance registers.

16. Removal from the program

Children can be removed from the program at any time by action of the building principal and the representative of the chief school officer, with an acknowledgement from the resource-room teacher. The proper form should be completed, which is the same form as used in the initial placement.

17. Parent involvement

Parent consent is not required for placement into the program; however, parents should be kept fully informed about every aspect of this program (providing them with a copy of this outline might be helpful).

All involvement of the resource-room teacher with parents will be through the building principal. Under no circumstances will the resource-room teacher contact parents without the explicit or implicit permission of the building principal.

18. Determination of the schedule for the children

The resource-room teacher, the principal and the regular classroom teachers who have the children in their rooms will determine the working schedule of the resource-room teacher. Consideration will be given for appropriate periods for planning, conferences, and other similar matters.

19. Number of children assigned to each unit

Up to 15 children can be assigned to each resource-room unit. However, at the secondary level, at the discretion of the resource-room teacher an additional five students can be assigned to the program.

20. The age ranges that can be included in each resource-room unit

Any age range can be included. However, the narrower the age range, the more effectively small groups can be formed, and, generally speaking, the more children probably can be enrolled.

21. The number of children served at any time

Between one and three or four each period, depending upon the nature of the children's problems and needs.

22. Time spent by children in the resource room

No more than one-half of their total school time may be spent in the resource-room program; when this is exceeded the children would be properly placed into a special class program. It is anticipated that most children would require from one to two hours each day in the resource-room. On the other hand, some children may require more and some less time.

If a child is in a school building only half of each day this is, in itself, not sufficient to justify placement into the resource-room program; other factors must be considered. For example, an extremely disturbed child who is sent home at noon (i.e., is on half days) would not be eligible for the resource-room program simply because he happened to be in school only half of each day. Such a child more properly should be placed into a special class program.

23. Evaluation of progress

Because all children will be evaluated for their learning difficulties after they are first placed into the resource-room program, periodic evaluations will be made on their progress with an emphasis on the factors that determined their original placement.

Under the new Commissioner's Regulations on the Handicapped, each district is required to file at least annually a progress report on each child, and this can become a part of the evaluation in the program.

Upon leaving the resource-room program, a final report will be prepared designating reasons for original placement, progress in the areas that resulted in the original placement decision, progress in all areas as observed, and any other general observations that will be helpful.

24. Physical space

A full-size classroom is not needed. A room with a minimum of 300 square feet of floor space is adequate. The space should be free from external distractions.

25. Curriculum materials

A great deal of material is needed because: (1) it is likely that the children served all will require different resources, (2) these materials will not always be identical with those used in the regular classes, and (3) children may frequently take material from the resource room to use in their regular classrooms.

A materials budget of up to $1,000 should be planned for each resource-room unit, depending upon the newness of the individual resource-room program and upon the availability of other materials in the building.

Part of the equipment for each resource-room unit should be a record player, a tape recorder, headsets, and a typewriter if requested; duplicating machines should be available for use.

26. Room furnishings

Minimum furnishings in the room should include:

1. A teacher's desk and chair
2. A small table with four children's chairs
3. Two regular children's desks and chairs
4. Shelves, including some closet space
5. Storage cabinets
6. A file cabinet
7. Electrical outlets
8. A study carrel or screen to use for this purpose
9. A mounted or portable chalkboard
10. Immediate access to an intra-school communications system

27. What are some potential hazards to the success of the resource-room program?

1. Allowing the program to become vague so those involved do not know what is expected of them or what the program is supposed to accomplish.

2. Expecting too much from the program and then becoming disillusioned. The resource-room program, any more than the special class programs, will not make all children "normal" and will not eliminate all problems of most of the children enrolled. Even with specialized reading assistance, for example, some children may always be poor readers; a child who is a poor reader but is relatively happy is better than an unhappy reader. The teachers in the program will not be combinations of Harvard professors, Menninger psychiatrists, and Iowa psychologists and will not behave and produce as if they were.

3. Assuming that the resource-room program is a total substitute for the special class programs, and thus placing children who should not be placed.

4. Non-involvement of building principals.

5. Lack of communication and understanding of the program by other teachers in the buildings where the programs are housed.

6. Use of unappropriate physical facilities.